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Struggle for a diocese

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Cp 283  
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NORTH CAROLINA



# THE STRUGGLE FOR A DIOCESE

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BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE STRUGGLE TO  
SECURE THE

ERECTION OF THE MISSIONARY DISTRICT OF  
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA,  
INTO A DIOCESE

COMPILED CHIEFLY FROM  
THE DISTRICT JOURNALS

1894-1919

1898-1919:

WITH AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE TRANSACTIONS INCIDENT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTED BY THE VERY REVEREND R. R. SWOPE, D. D.

## PREFACE

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"I think the greatest obligation resting upon us and the the one that will be so considered by the Church in the United States is to become a self supporting Diocese at the earliest possible date and our growth in financial strength in the last few years, warrants the calculation that within the next few years we can apply to the General Convention for organization into a Diocese."

Nearly seventeen years have passed since Bishop Horner made this statement in his Convention Address at Hickory, in June 1902.

There are a great many of the clergy and laity who believe today that this "greatest obligation" still rests upon us, only with the added burden of seventeen years of existence as a District.

At the Convention of 1918, an overwhelming majority expressed its will that the District should become a Diocese forthwith. The following pages give the history of the movement set on foot as long ago as 1902. It is a movement for the good of the Church and for the greater glory of GOD.

When the Diocese is organized according to the Constitution, the Right Reverend Junius Moore Horner, D. D., will automatically advance to the dignity of a Diocesan Bishop. Can we not all get together and make the Diocese an accomplished fact at the General Convention to be held in October this year.

FREDERICK D. LOBDELL  
CHAS. E. WADDELL  
KINGSLAND VANWINKLE  
H. NORWOOD BOWNE  
REGINALD HOWLAND  
HERBERT D. MILES

JOHN H. PEARSON  
JAMES B. SILL  
R. R. HARRIS  
WILLIAM T. LINDSEY  
CYRIL E. BENTLEY  
CHARLES MERCER HALL

# HISTORY

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**1894** Resolution adopted in the Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina that the Western part of the State be set off and offered to the General Church as a Missionary District. This occurred at Winston, May, 1894.

**1895** At the Convention of Diocese of North Carolina held at Morganton the Committee made a favorable report.

The General Convention meeting in October in Minneapolis consented, after some discussion (doubt being felt by some members of the House of Bishops of their power under our Constitution to alter the territorial extent of a Diocese in this form), to the setting off of that part of the State of North Carolina lying west of the eastern line of the Counties of Allegheny, Wilkes, Alexander, Catawba, Lincoln and Gaston, by a line running from the State line of Virginia to that of South Carolina.

The House of Bishops however, did not nominate a Bishop for the new District.

When this matter was before the House of Bishops the Committee on Domestic Missions, to whom the Memorial from North Carolina praying that the cession of territory be accepted, reported adversely, assigning three reasons for their action:

First, that there was no statement from the Diocese of North Carolina binding it to turn over the property in the Missionary District.

Second, there is no pledge given by the parishes lying in the proposed Missionary District that they will continue to pay toward the support of the Missionary Bishop the money now contributed toward the support of the Bishop of North Carolina.

Third, your Committee believe the territory can be administered for the next three years without serious loss to the Church.

**1895** November 12-13 The first Convention of the District of Asheville was held in Trinity Church, Asheville, Bishop Cheshire presiding, and in his address to the Convention he said:

"The jurisdiction of Asheville has been erected but no Bishop has been consecrated or elected for it.

"But when another meeting of the House of Bishops convenes the election of a Missionary Bishop of Asheville may depend very largely upon our ability within this jurisdiction to provide a considerable part of his salary. Your Bishop and deputies, when urging the memorial of the Diocese of North Carolina, were given plainly to understand that when part of an old Diocese is accepted by the General Convention as missionary territory and erected into a missionary jurisdiction, the Board of Managers will expect such jurisdiction to assume a certain and specific part of the support of their Bishop.

"In our case this must be provided in two ways: First, we must keep our congregations up to the payment of the regular assessment for the episcopal and contingent fund: . . . . . as soon as a bishop has been consecrated this should yield an annual income of over Five Hundred Dollars, in our present condition and at the present scale of assessments

"It however could be easily increased to Six Hundred Dollars by a careful collection of the small amounts asked from our numerous missions, and this without estimating anything from the increase and development of the work. But this sum is much less than we shall be expected to do toward the support of a bishop, and an effort should be made at once to raise a fund for the support of the episcopate.

". . . . . It is surely not saying much when we say that two or three years may see sufficient growth to give us the required number of self supporting parishes for the diocese. If that should be the case, then nothing would stand in our way except the want of proper provision for the support of a bishop. Therefore, this first representative meeting of the missionary jurisdiction of Asheville should at once begin the work of preparing for the proper, permanent support of a bishop." (Journal of 1895, page 12.)

**1898** At the General Convention held in Washington, D. C., in October, the House of Bishops, upon a guarantee of \$2500.00 a year for a period of three years being given nominated the Rev. Junius M. Horner, D. D., as Missionary Bishop for Asheville, and Bishop Horner was consecrated on

the 28th of December of that year and entered upon his duties.

Of the amount so guaranteed, there was paid by the Treasurer of the District from the proceeds of the Ravenscroft Fund and the Episcopal & Contingent Fund \$4167.08, the balance of \$3332.92 being contributed by Mr. George Vanderbilt, who gave the guarantee.

**1902** Convention held at Hickory June 12. In his address to the Convention Bishop Horner said, "In view of the report of the Finance Committee which has been placed in your hands . . . . I deem it my duty to call your attention specially to the financial condition of our District.

"I think the greatest obligation resting upon us and the one that will be so considered by the Church in the United States is to become a self supporting Diocese at the earliest possible date and our growth in financial strength in the last few years warrants the calculation that within the next few years we can apply to the General Convention for organization into a Diocese. An examination of the contributions of our District to objects outside show, I think, that we have fully realized our obligations as to what might be expected from this District as expressed in the open letter of the Special Committee appointed to prepare a statement to go before the General Convention in asking for a Bishop for this District.

"The guarantee of \$2500.00 a year for three years towards support of a bishop has been paid in full to the Board of Missions, and in addition thereto seven or eight hundred dollars a year has been contributed to the Board . . . . Contributions of our District to objects outside shows, I think, principally extra parochial, have increased from \$4022.00 in 1898 to \$8883.00 this year (1902). These figures indicate a very substantial financial growth and show that we may hope to become self supporting in a few years.

"Our obligations to the Board will be fully met . . . . and this will leave the income of our invested funds at the disposal of this Convention, unincumbered, as I feel, by any obligations whatever. This income is at present between \$1000.00 and 1200.00.

This income can be used towards forming an endowment

fund for the District, or it can be expended in Missionary work in the District.

"I strongly advocate the appointment of a Committee on Endowment, with instructions to endeavor to raise an endowment within the next five years, so that we may go before the General Convention in 1907 and ask to be organized into a Diocese, and the income of our invested funds should be placed at the disposal of this Committee to be used in this endowment. It would be needless for me to go into the details of this Committee, but I am satisfied that the necessary endowment can be raised without an undue burden upon any mission or parish." (Journal, 1902, page 60.)

This part of the Bishop's address was referred to a special Committee which reported to this Convention that independence with full privileges of a Diocese is to be earnestly hoped and planned for. They made five recommendations:

That the Board of Managers be informed of our plan.

That the interest funds as they accumulate be applied to the improvement of the Ravenscroft property.

That the trustees be authorized to use all means necessary for the improvement of the property.

That a Committee of five be appointed to act with the Bishop in raising \$10,000.00.

Ask the Board of Missions to cooperate in raising \$30,000.00, so relieving them of a permanent obligation equal to an investment of \$60,000.00. (Journal of 1902, page 32.)

These recommendations were adopted and a Committee appointed.

**1903** Convention held at Waynesville. The Committee on Endowment reported: At the present time it is inexpedient to make any effort to raise an Episcopal Endowment Fund . . . . until a legal decision shall be made in the actions to be brought by other Jurisdictions as to our claims upon funds in the hands of the Board of Missions.

That the resolutions of the last Convention in regard to the proposed endowment be rescinded.

That the revenues of the Ravenscroft and other funds be paid to the order of the Missionary Committee for the purpose of extending the work of that Committee. Page 25.

**1904** Convention at Lincolnton. Rev. Mr. Wetmore offered resolution that "The Bishop appoint a Committee of three clerical and three lay members of the Convention to solicit funds both within and without the District of Asheville for an Episcopal endowment, to the end that we may become a diocese." Page 40.

Resolution adopted and Committee appointed.

**1905** Convention in Asheville. The Committee on Endowment reported that the matter committed to them was vague, no plan was reported, and that the purpose of the resolution seemed merely to be to keep the matter before the Church and remind our people that we hoped some time to become a diocese.

Later in the session the following resolution was adopted: "That the parishes and missions of the District be requested to take two offerings during the next year for the Episcopal Endowment Fund, and that the Clergy of the District be earnestly requested to explain and impress the importance of this fund upon the individual members of their congregations. Pages 27-28.

**1907** Convention at Lenoir. The Committee on Endowment reported progress and recommended that an effort be made to secure some of the Men's Missionary Thank Offering, which was then being solicited, for our Endowment Fund.

**1908** Convention at Morganton. Committee on Endowment reported nothing doing but urged decision to become a diocese in a definite time, with or without assistance from without the District.

**1909** Convention at Asheville. Committee on Endowment reported small receipts and urged that the matter be kept before the people.

**1910** Convention at Waynesville. On motion the Committee appointed to frame a plan for Diocesan organization was discharged.

**1914** Convention at Asheville It was resolved: That the Bishop be requested to appoint a Committee of five to consider and report to the next Convention some plan by

which the District may be formed into a diocese at the next meeting of the General Convention.

The Bishop appointed the Rev. Dr. Swope, the Rev. W. Brown, the Rev. F. D. Lobdell and Messrs Parker and Bacon as such committee

**1915** Convention at Asheville. The Committee appointed at the last Convention reported the Assets of the District to be:

Episcopal Endowment Fund -----	\$ 798.12
Atlantic Coast Line Bonds -----	4000.00
Notes and other securities -----	37550.00
Real Estate, conservatively estimated as worth -----	30000.00
	<hr/>
	\$72348.12
To be received from the Board of Missions if claimed before another Missionary District-----	\$10000.00
	<hr/>
	\$82348.12

From this sum a loan of \$2,000.00 made to the Education Fund in 1909 for which the Atlantic Coast Line bonds are pledged must be deducted, "leaving \$80,348.12 as the amount which on a conservative estimate the District now has or may anticipate having in the near future."

Also that "We must increase our contributions so as to meet the charges . . . . now being paid from the Ravenscroft Interest account; making up the existing deficit in the District Missions' Fund; and increase that fund by approximately \$2000; in short, the District will have to raise about \$4,000 a year in excess of what it is now doing . . . . Let this Convention then inaugurate a definite policy for increasing our contributions with Diocesan autonomy as the objective, and this, if possible, in 1916."

On motion it was resolved That the report of the Committee on some plan by which the District may be formed into a Diocese, presented yesterday by the Rev. Dr. Swope, be received and printed in the Journal, and that the Committee be enlarged, so as to consist of twelve members, five clerical and seven lay.

Resolved, further, That this Committee be instructed to consider and formulate a plan by which the District may be formed into a Diocese and report the same to the next Convention.

1916 Convention at Asheville. In his address the Bishop said: "After some discussion at our last Convention it was decided to enlarge the special Committee on Diocesan Organization to twelve members, with the expectation that a practical plan might be worked out that would make it advisable to take definite action towards organization. We are all agreed perhaps in the desire for Diocesan organization, but may differ greatly as to the method.

"As Bishop of this District, I have from the very first looked forward to such organization, and have desired it, but have objected to two methods, which have seemed to some the simplest and most desirable. One of these methods was for the Bishop to go outside and secure contribution, sufficient to make, with what assets we have, an endowment for the Diocese. I have had all I could do to get money from outside in sufficient amounts to carry on the school and evangelical work of the District, and I objected both as a matter of principle and as a matter of practicality to this method.

"The other method advanced has been the one I understand the present committee is prepared to propose to this Convention. That is, to take all the present available assets which have, up to this time been used to supplement the meagre stipends of the Missionary Clergy, and to put such amounts into a special fund for an Episcopal endowment and to trust to the new impetus given by Diocesan organization to make up the loss to the Missionary Clergy. Such impetus may possibly be sufficient to make up to the Clergy the loss in their stipends they would thus surrender. I doubt it, however, very seriously.

"My advice would be: That the committee appointed canvass by some special arrangement the whole District and find out beforehand, what each Parish and Mission would be able and willing to contribute each year towards the Mission fund to make up for the loss of the income from the present fund, and if it should be found that the contributions so pledged would be sufficient to make up the stipends needed, then the Missionary Clergy might be justified in voting to surrender their claims upon the present income from invested funds . . . . The whole District should be consulted and informed in regard to this organization, and if this is done and the

District as a whole feels sufficiently interested to back up their interest with contributions and pledges in satisfactory amounts, I would be most heartily in favor of immediate organization thereupon."

The Committee on Diocesan Organization presented their report as follows:

"Your Committee has held two meetings during the past year and it presents the following as a result of its deliberations:

To endow the Episcopate will require a principal sum of approximately \$66,000.00, which invested at 5 per cent will yield \$3,300.00. The Trustees of the District have now approximately \$40,000.00 derived from the sale of real estate. There are also Atlantic Coast Line bonds to the value of \$2,000.00 owned by the District, and \$798.12 in what is called the Episcopal Endowment Fund; so we have in hand \$42,798.12. We have also the promise of the General Board of Missions that, should our district become a Diocese before another Missionary District applies for it, we will receive \$10,000.00, a balance in the hands of the Board of what has been known as the Harold Brown Fund; so that we will have to raise \$14,000.00 to complete the principal sum named, \$66,000.00.

It is highly probable that in the next few years the Trustees will come into possession of much more than this amount, as in addition to what they now have in hand, there are some lots unsold in the Ravenscroft property, and the whole of the valuable Roebling tract

Your Committee recommends, therefore, that this Convention formally set aside all invested funds derived from the sale of real estate, including the present \$2,000.00 of Atlantic Coast Line bonds, now in the hands of the Trustees, as a permanent fund for the support of the Episcopate; and, further, to provide that all money received in the future from the sale of real estate at Ravenscroft and the Roebling tract shall become a part of this same fund until the Permanent Fund amounts to \$66,000.00; and that, until the Permanent Fund is completed, the amount necessary to complete the stipend paid the Bishop shall be assessed upon the Parishes and Missions.

Your Committee recommends, further, that the necessary

canonical action be taken at this time to organize the District into a Diocese.

(Signed) RODNEY R. SWOPE, Chairman;  
R. N. WILLCOX,  
FREDERICK D. LOBDELL,  
G. H. HARRISON,  
FRANCIS P. BACON,  
THOMAS SETTLE,  
HAYWOOD PARKER,  
CHAS. E. WADDELL,  
HARMON MILLER,  
WM. L. BALTHIS "

This report received an animated and enthusiastic discussion, and on motion of Mr. Haywood Parker, it was

Resolved, That it is the desire and request of this Convention that the Bishop call a Convention of this District to meet within the next sixty days for the purpose of considering and taking such action as many be necessary to make proper application to the next General Convention for erecting the District into a Diocese.

And on motion of the Rev. E. N. Joyner, it was

Resolved, That the Committee on Diocesan Organization be continued, and that this committee be instructed to take action at the earliest possible moment to bring the merits and methods of this matter before the Parishes and Missions of the District.

A Special Convention was called by the Bishop to meet August 16, 1916, but on August 8, the Council of Advice advised the Bishop to withdraw and cancel the call for this convention, on the ground of exigencies having arisen owing to the notable flood of July. The call for the convention was thereupon cancelled. All possibility therefore, of the formation of a Diocese in 1916 was thus frustrated and again left to be carried over for the consideration of some future Annual Convention.

**1917** Convention at Tryon. The Committee on Diocesan Organization presented the following report, which was adopted, and the Committee continued.

"Your Committee respectfully submits:

First, That this committee believes that this District is possessed of sufficient property and Trust Funds, to enable it to make application to become a Diocese.

Secondly, That the conditions in this District warrant us in making such application to the General Convention.

Your Committee recommend that this Convention either appoint another committee for this purpose, or continue the present Committee on Diocesan Organization, and instruct it to prepare all necessary data looking towards suitable action, at our next Annual Convention, whereby we may make application to the General Convention for admission as a Diocese

Be it Resolved, Therefore, That this Convention request the Bishop at this Convention, to designate, and call our next Annual Convention for the purpose of making such application to become a Diocese, in addition to its regular business.

And on motion the Committee was continued.

In his address the Bishop said: "IV. I would like you to start now with some definite policy looking to the organization of the District into a Diocese before the next General Convention if possible, and in order to do this, we must lose no time in preparing each Parish and Mission for the change.

**1918** Under date of March 22, 1918, the Committee on Diocesan Organization sent out a letter stating that: "The proposition resolves itself into one of ways and means, and as nearly \$3,100.00 in addition to the present existing apportionments must be raised annually in order that the stipends of the Missionaries may be met and assured, you are requested to bring this to the attention of your congregation, etc."

At the Convention at Asheville the Committee presented the following report:

"Your Committee offer for your action the following resolution. Resolved, That the Bishop and the Secretary notify the Board of Missions that it is the purpose of the District of Asheville to take action at its 1919 Convention, by resolution and in conformity with canonical requirements, to request the Triennial General Convention to admit the District as a Diocese.

Resolved, That all sums accruing from the permanent funds during the year 1918, which income has hitherto been used to pay missionary stipends and otherwise, be set aside in escrow in interest bearing certificates of some bank, and said sum be held subject to the action of the 1919 Convention.

The Treasurer of the District being hereby directed to so invest said income and to report to the next Convention.

Resolved, That whereas the Bishop has heretofore been using the income from the invested funds to pay missionary stipends, and that the withdrawal of this income will materially handicap the work of the District, that an assessment in proportion to their several abilities to pay be levied on the Parishes and Missions of the District, said assessment to equal the net income derived from the invested funds for the year 1917, and said assessment to be paid by the Parishes and Missions in quarterly installments to the District Treasurer.

Resolved, That should this plan work out successfully in the coming year, the District stands pledged to adopt at its 1919 Convention resolutions necessary to admission as a Diocese."

In his Address the Bishop said:

"The minimum required by the canons to justify organization is a little less than \$3,000, and this should seem a small amount for a district like this to be called upon to raise, but when we consider it from another point of view and know that to maintain the work as now organized, we get from without the District something more than \$50,000 a year, we must realize that we are not yet ready to assume self support and independence. It is true that part of this outside help would continue to be given, but more or less of it would be jeopardized, and it would be much harder for our Missionaries to secure this outside help. They all feel, I am sure, it is hard enough as it is. . . . .

" . . . . . we should, for our own good, postpone an attempt at organization for the present, and until the laity of the various Parishes and Missions have been fully informed of the issues involved in organization. If they, knowing what is involved, will agree to take up the financial burden required, I would be more than rejoiced to cooperate with them and to push the organization to completion.

"I hope the committee on organization will bring in some plan that will put to the practical test the financial attitude of the laity both of the Parishes and Missions."

Finally, a vote was taken, by orders, on the question of accepting the report of the Committee and adopting its recommendations, its plan to be put into effect immediately. The

motion, as above, was thereupon adopted by an almost unanimous vote, only three clerical votes being cast in the negative. The Committee was thereupon discharged and the matter of assessing the Parishes and Missions turned over to the Missionary Committee. Page 22.

After the adjournment of the Convention, the Finance Committee reported to the Missionary Committee that "the additional fixed expenses we would have to assume, by becoming a Diocese, are at least \$4,500.00 annually."

## STATISTICS

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1895. Priests 16; Deacons 7; Total Clergy 22. Parishes 8; Organized Missions 11; Unorganized 35

1896. Families 637; Persons 2769; Baptisms 322; Confirmations 203; Communicants 1368; S. S. Teachers 149; Pupils 1305; Parish Schools 10; Teachers 14; Pupils 482. Offerings \$12,307.50; District Missions \$618.04.

1914. Priests 28; Deacons 6; Parishes 13; Organized Missions 33; Unorganized 47; Families 1781; Persons 5889; Baptisms 352; Confirmations 215; Communicants 3223; S. S. Teachers 305; Pupils 2605; Mission Teachers 53; Scholars 1053; Offerings \$39,632.70.

1917-1918. (Statistics for 19 months.) Priests 31; Deacons 4; Parishes 15; Organized Missions 33; Unorganized 39; Families-----; Persons 6,280; Baptisms 610; Confirmations 327; Communicants 3,679; S. S. Teachers, 271; Pupils 2,838; Mission Teachers 31; Scholars 701; Offerings \$89,704.95 for 19 months, an average of \$4,721 31 a month, or say \$56,655.72 for 12 months.



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